

## California Adopts Four Laws to Develop Recycling, Composting, Waste Reduction

Oct 13, 2015 [Allan Gerlat](#)



California has adopted four new laws addressing organics, recycling and waste diversion. Gov. Jerry Brown has signed into law bills that called for addressing organic waste by developing compost and anaerobic digestion; providing a tax exemption on recycling equipment; and a ban on products containing plastic microbeads that can be rinsed down the drain, according to news releases from the Sacramento-based environmental group, [Californians Against Waste](#).

AB 1045 requires state entities to work together for the development and deployment of composting. The law will cut down on red tape associated with compost production, according to the bill's sponsor, Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks).



AB 876 requires local governments to plan for the building of sufficient composting and anaerobic digestion infrastructure to process for a 15-year period in their jurisdictions. Assembly Member Kevin McCarty, (D-Sacramento), authored the bill.

"California's local governments have done a great job ensuring sufficient disposal capacity for their residents, but, as increasing amounts of discards are instead managed at recycling facilities, it is time that we apply the same forethought to planning for the infrastructure that will be necessary to handle this material," said Nick Lapis, legislative coordinator for Californians Against Waste.

The state's Air Resources Board has set a goal of basically eliminating the disposal of organic waste by 2025.

AB 199 creates a sales-and-use tax exemption for businesses on purchases of equipment used for recycling and composting, as well as equipment that processes recycled materials. Businesses may apply for the exemption with the California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority (CAEATFA), which provides similar exemptions for sustainable energy and transportation purchases with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Assembly Member Susan Eggman (D-Stockton) authored the legislation.

Lastly, Gov. Brown signed a law banning personal care products containing plastic microbeads, such as toothpastes, soaps and shower gels that are designed to be rinsed down the drain.

AB 888 addresses the trillions of tiny fragments of plastic that has ended up in rivers, lakes and oceans, and are mistaken for food by fish and other wildlife, according to the group.

"AB 888 ensures that personal care products will be formulated with environmentally-safe alternatives," said Assembly Member Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica), who authored the bill.

It was sponsored by the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), Californians Against Waste, The Story of Stuff Project, The 5 Gyres Institute and Clean Water Action.

A recent study by the San Francisco Estuary Institute found the San Francisco Bay has some of the highest concentrations of plastic pollution of any major U.S. body of water, and a recent University of California-Davis study found a quarter of fish at markets have ingested plastic or other man-made debris.

California's aggressive recycling goal of 75 percent by 2020 has prompted steady activity. Most recently, [Monterey County said it is building a new material recovery facility](#) (MRF) that will process more than 30 tons per hour (TPH) of single-stream waste, 40 TPH of mixed waste and 40 TPH of construction and demolition (C&D) materials. The Monterey Regional Waste Management District (MRWMD) will open the multi-line operation in September 2016.

In September [San Jose began a pilot food waste collection program](#) in conjunction with recycling and waste hauler Garden City Sanitation (GCS). The pilot program will test two types of carts for residential food waste collection. One will be a newly designed split garbage cart, with a 48-gallon section for waste on one side and a 16-gallon section for food scraps on the other. The one-year pilot program is available to 6,500 San Jose households in the GCS service area. Participation is voluntary.

In addition to the new cart technology, GCS also is operating a new processing facility to add to the environmental benefit of the program. GCS President Louie Pellegrini designed and engineered the processing facility and food scrap collection method, called the Sustainable Alternative Feed Enterprises, or SAFE.

Still, a report in August claimed that [California is nowhere near its trash reduction goal](#) set in 2011. Since then, the report stated that California's source-reduction, recycling and composting rates haven't improved from 50 percent.

